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ABSTRACT

This statement by the American Library Association (ALA) for the Subcommittee on Legislative Appropriations of the House Committee on Appropriations endorses the Library of Congress request for funding in 1975 and requests that funding be increased for the Office of Superintendent of Documents for the same period. The value and importance of several activities of the Library of Congress is commented upon, specifically: the National Program for Acquisitions and Cataloging, the PL-480 Program for India, the work of the Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, and the Affirmative Action Program. Some of the services of the Office of Superintendent of Documents vital to libraries and the American public are described, and the problems besetting the Office (sharp price increases and backlogged orders, for instance) which have an adverse effect on both groups are discussed. The ALA also urges increased financial support for the Depository Library Program of the Office so that material may be more promptly delivered to depository libraries, more adequate inspection of the libraries can be made, and more non-GPO U.S. Government publications can be included in the depository program. A copy of the January 25, 1974 resolution of the ALA is appended. (JG)

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Statement of

Eileen D. Cooke, Associate Executive Director
American Library Association

for the
Subcommittee on Legislative Branch Appropriations
of the

House Committee on Appropriations

March 22, 1974

The American Library Association is a nonprofit educational organization of about 35,000 librarians, library trustees, and other citizens who are committed to the advancement of library service to all the people. Founded in 1876, the Association is the oldest and largest national library association in the world. Its concern spans all types of libraries: state, public, school and academic libraries, special libraries serving persons in government, commerce and industry, the arts, the armed services, hospitals and other institutions.

The Association has always maintained a strong interest in the Library of Congress which provides invaluable services to every library in the land as well as to all Members of Congress. As the preeminent national library of the United States, the Library of Congress requires adequate funding if it is to continue helping all libraries advance the educational, economic, scientific and cultural development of the American people. The American Library Association therefore strongly endorses the request of the Library of Congress for FY 1975 funding.

The Association is interested also in the Office of the Superintendent of Documents, which has responsibility for several programs of vital importance to library service in America. To assist the Office in carrying out its responsibilities authorized by law, we request that a substantially increased level of funding be provided in FY 1975 for the Office of Superintendent of Documents.

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LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

National Program for Acquisitions and Cataloging

We request that special attention be given to the need for support of the very successful National Program for Acquisitions and Cataloging (NPAC), the centralized acquisition and cataloging program through which the Library of Congress provides sophisticated bibliographic information for virtually every research library in the country. Statements from the large research libraries point out that 75 percent of their cataloging needs are now being met through the NPAC program. Libraries across the country are being spared costly duplication of effort thanks to this centralized, national cataloging program, and researchers and scholars in every subject area are gaining more rapid and complete access to the world's recorded knowledge. The program is of vital importance and should be funded at the $9.3 million level requested by the Library of Congress.

PL-480 Program in India

Under the Special Foreign Currency Program, at the suggestion of the Department of State, the Library of Congress has requested for its program in India an FY 1975 appropriation of foreign currencies which have accrued to the U.S. Government by means other than the sale of surplus agricultural commodities. This language change is required by the transfer to the Government of India of PL 480 rupees accrued by the U.S. Government. The authority sought would not alter the geographical coverage of the Library's program which would still be limited to "Excess Currency Countries." The American Library Association supports this request which, if granted, would allow the Library to continue its acquisition of material from India, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped

The Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, in cooperation with libraries in all parts of the country, makes available to blind and handicapped persons a wide range of recorded listening materials, records, cassettes, tapes,

special phonographs, earphones, variable speed attachments and remote control units -- in short, free talking book services for children and adults with disabilities that prevent reading print. The work of the Division is supplemented at the state and local level by funds provided under the Library Services and Construction Act, as well as funds from state and private sources. In FY 1974, the Division received the funds to establish two multi-state centers to serve as storage and distribution points for these materials. The two centers will be evaluated before a decision is made to request support for additional storage and distribution centers. We support the full amount - $11.5 million - requested by the Librarian of Congress for the Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped.

Affirmative Action Program

We urge that increased funding be made available to strengthen the Library's affirmative action program so that all Library employees are assured of equal employment opportunity, in conformance with the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972 (PL 92-261).

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF DOCUMENTS

Libraries of all kinds, in all parts of the country, are vitally concerned with the Office of the Superintendent of Documents which is charged by law not only with mailing Government publications for Members of Congress and other Government agencies, but also with the sale of Government publications produced by the Government Printing Office, the compilation of catalogs and indexes of Government publications, and the distribution of Government publications to designated depository libraries.

The American Library Association has maintained a cooperative working relationship with the Public Printer and the Superintendent of Documents for many years. Through the Advisory Council to the Public Printer for Depository Libraries, representatives of the Association advise and assist the Public Printer concerning the administration of the nationwide federal depository

library program. The Office of the Superintendent of Documents provides many services which are of inestimable value to libraries throughout the nation in making available to the American people information by and about their Government.

Yet in recent years the work of the Office has become increasingly difficult and burdensome, thus limiting its effectiveness in the dissemination of Government publications. The problems are largely due to the Superintendent of Documents' need for additional space, resources, and staff to handle the increased volume of Government information. The Congressional Record alone provides a good example of the increased output. A mere 30,000 pages in 1962, the Record last year ran to 48,000 pages, an increase of 60 percent. The steep rise in the cost of paper and postage, as well as higher labor costs, are compounding the problems of the Superintendent of Documents Office.

To assist the Office of the Superintendent of Documents in solving the many problems that now impede the flow of Government publications to the American public, the American Library Association urges that the House Appropriations Committee recommend substantially increased appropriations for the Office for FY 1975.

Because of the close relationship between the Nation's libraries and the Office of the Superintendent of Documents, problems in the Office are very likely to have almost immediate adverse effects on libraries. A brief description follows of some of the problems and their adverse effects on library service to the American people.

GPO's Steep Price Increases

Late in 1973, the Government Printing Office announced steep price increases for its publications. In its November 1973 Price List 36, the Superintendent of Documents established new prices for government periodicals. According to the List, the Congressional Record would now cost 75 cents a copy instead of 25 cents,[1/] the Federal Register would be 75 cents a copy instead of 20 cents,

1/The increased cost of the Congressional Record has not taken effect.

Current Business Reports would rise from $13.00 a year to $30.10 a year, Monthly Labor Review would cost $16.25 a year instead of $9.00, and so on across the board. Libraries dependent upon government publications to serve their patrons were immediately affected by the new price increases. A county library in Oklahoma described the problem as follows:

> Public libraries such as ours make heavy use of government publications, and frequently purchase these invaluable documents in large quantities for broad distribution to our users. The wide range of practical topics (e.g., how to freeze food, how to build rabbit hutches, home gardening, learning disabilities, etc.) represented by these publications afford libraries an information source they have long depended on. In addition to these less expensive publications, this system regularly purchases standard government document reference and statistical publications such as the U.S. Code and Code of Federal Regulations, Occupational Outlook Handbook, the Congressional Record and Index, Monthly Catalog, etc.
>
> This library system budgets approximately $3,000 annually to purchase GPO publications. Abrupt, sharp price increases in our routine ordering experience with GPO over the past six months suggest we will need to triple this budget next year to keep pace with the increases.

Many libraries have indicated that they will have to cut down on the number of government publications they now purchase from GPO, because their own budgetary constraints will not allow them to increase their book budgets sufficiently to meet the new price increases. Others have indicated that they must have the government publications to serve their patrons and will necessarily cut back on their purchase of trade publications instead. Attached to this statement are some brief descriptions from libraries of the adverse effects caused by the sharply increased prices now charged by GPO.

Postal Rate Increases

Since the Postal Reorganization Act, sharply increased postal rates have continually plagued libraries. Unlike many other users of the mails, libraries have no way of passing higher postal charges on to their patrons, since libraries make no charge for their services. They must offset higher postage costs by reducing other expenditures, which almost always means that they purchase fewer books, subscriptions and other library materials for the use of their patrons.

In a statement concerning the increase in government documents prices, the Public Documents Department of GPO attributed the higher prices in part to greatly increased postal rates. As a result of the Postal Reorganization Act, the Government Printing Office now pays the same postage charges as unsubsidized private users will eventually pay rather than the substantially smaller charges previously assessed. Private mailers are authorized five years in which to reach the postage rates for mailings that Government agencies including GPO were required to begin paying immediately.

The American Library Association urges the House Appropriations Committee to favorably consider giving GPO a substantial subsidy to offset postage costs for mailing government documents to public libraries and other nonprofit libraries accessible to the public.

Backlog of Orders

The Office of Superintendent of Documents has made a major effort in the past year to reduce the time required to fill orders, and it appears that progress is being made to reach its target of 21 days for processing, packaging, and mailing orders. Nevertheless, many problems still remain in the filling of orders not only from libraries but from members of the public who purchase their own copies of government documents.

Depository Library Program

The American Library Association strongly supports the depository program and in the interest of providing the widest possible public access to U.S. government information on the local level, urges additional financial support for the depository system. Particularly, the Association requests that additional funds be provided during FY 1975 to enable the Superintendent of Documents to make prompt delivery of books and pamphlets to depository libraries throughout the Nation, to provide more adequate inspection of depository libraries, and to carry out the program authorized by the 1962 Depository Library Act of bringing more non-GPO U.S. Government publications into the depository program. Inadequate

funding has prevented this "non-GPO" section of the law from being implemented in little more than a token way. Expressing concern that the program has not been carried out to any significant extent, the Council of the American Library Association adopted a resolution at its Midwinter Meeting in January 1974, requesting appropriations for the Superintendent of Documents for additional personnel and resources in order to add new federal agencies to the depository program. A copy of the resolution is attached to this statement.

In conclusion, we very much appreciate this opportunity to present the views of the American Library Association on FY 1975 appropriations for the Library of Congress and the Office of the Superintendent of Documents.

* * *

Attachments: Some Responses from Libraries about Price Increases at the U.S. Government Printing Office - March 1974
Resolution on Government Documents

Some Responses from Libraries about Price Increases at the U.S. Government Printing Office - March 1974

A public library in New Hampshire

"We may not purchase the Federal Reserve Bulletin and the Commerce Business Daily as planned. The cost increase will prevent us from providing documents which our patrons have requested."

A college library in Ohio

"...the Monthly Weather Review, which has been dropped by GPO, is to be published by American Meteorological Society at $60.00 a year. We have been receiving it on depository. We are going to drop it." (GPO's price was $19.00.)

An academic library in Oklahoma

The likely effects of the new GPO price increases will be a cutback in the number of documents purchased. "Those eliminated will probably be some periodical subscriptions. Unfortunately they are important to a research library."

A college library in Pennsylvania

"The requests from our Economics Department for GPO items have increased... With the increased prices we won't be able to take care of the normal requests, let alone the increased volume. We might have to cut down on trade publications to pay for government items we absolutely must have."

A university library in Texas

"We will no longer purchase duplicate copies of such publications as the Monthly Catalog, the Government Organization Manual, or the Zip Code Directory." (This library serves about 5,000 students and faculty.)

A public library in West Virginia

The price increases will force us to reduce the number of documents purchased, perhaps by 50 to 75 percent. "We should make MORE U.S. Documents available to our patrons rather than less....Decisions based on fact and not fiction are essential to a free and democratic society."

A public library in Ohio

"In a time when the free flow of information is essential to the nation, the prohibitive costs of government publications will indeed be a detriment to this community, this state and to the whole country."

A college library in Georgia

The price increases may force a reduction by as much as 25 percent in the number of documents purchased. "As we are currently having a budget crisis here, the increase in prices is going to catch us in the middle."

* * *

AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION
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WHEREAS the Depository Library Act of 1962 provides for the Superintendent of Documents to secure publications printed outside of the Government Printing Office in order to distribute them to selecting depositories;

WHEREAS many of these publications are of value to a number of the depository libraries in the country;

WHEREAS the Government Printing Office has not added new agencies to the non-GPO program during the past five years;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the American Library Association urge the Superintendent of Documents to ask for appropriations for additional personnel and resources in order to add new agencies to the program.

Adopted by ALA Council
January 25, 1974